

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend the claims according to the following listing of the claims.

1 – 25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) A method of forming a component, comprising:
 - heating an aluminum coated steel blank to an austenization temperature;
 - rapidly cooling said blank;
 - ~~allowing storing said heat treated blank to stand at room temperature for an interval of time;~~
 - heating said cooled, heat treated blank a second time to an austenization temperature greater than or equal to 850°C; and
 - forming said blank while heated to produce said component.
27. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26 wherein the interval of the initial heating of said blank is in the range of 9 to 30 minutes.
28. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26 wherein the conditions of the second heat treatment are controlled so as not to increase the layer thickness of the blank.
29. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26 wherein the interval of the subsequent heating of said blank is in the range of 10 seconds to 2 ½ minutes.
30. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26 including varying the heat applied to different portions of the surface of the blank.
31. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 26 including reinforcing said blank between ~~said separate heat treatments~~ the first heating and the second heating.
32. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26 including maintaining said blank in a heated condition while forming.
33. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26, wherein the first heating step causes an increase in layer thickness of the aluminum coating.

34. (New) The method according to claim 26, wherein prior to the storing step, the method further comprises transporting the heat treated blank to a storage area.
35. (New) The method according to claim 26, wherein the step of heating the aluminum coated steel blank takes place in a first manufacturing process, and wherein the step of heating the cooled, heated treated blank takes place in a second manufacturing process.
36. (New) The method according to claim 35, wherein the first manufacturing process and the second manufacturing process are decoupled.
37. (New) The method according to claim 35, wherein the first manufacturing process is continuous.
38. (New) The method according to claim 35, wherein the second manufacturing process is continuous.
39. (New) The method according to claim 26, wherein for at least a portion of the interval of time, the heat treated blank is allowed to stand at room temperature.
40. (New) The method according to claim 26, wherein the step of heating the aluminum coated steel blank takes place at a first location, and wherein the step of heating the cooled, heated treated blank takes place at a second location.
41. (New) The method according to claim 26, wherein the step of heating the aluminum coated steel blank takes place at a first facility, and wherein the step of heating the cooled, heated treated blank takes place at a second facility.
42. (New) The method according to claim 26, wherein the step of heating the aluminum coated steel blank takes place at a first furnace, and wherein the step of heating the cooled, heated treated blank takes place at a second furnace.
43. (New) The method according to claim 42, wherein the first furnace is selected from the group consisting of a continuous furnace and a revolving furnace, and wherein the second furnace is an induction furnace.
44. (New) The method according to claim 26, wherein the step of heating said cooled, heat treated blank is performed in a transport device comprising an inductor.